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Democracy: Four Paradigmatic Views

Kavous Ardalan, Marist College, U.S.A.

Abstract: *Any explanation of democracy is based on a worldview. The premise of this paper is that any worldview can be associated with one of the four broad paradigms: functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist, and radical structuralist. This paper takes the case of democracy and discusses it from the four different viewpoints. It emphasizes that the four views expressed are equally scientific and informative; they look at the phenomenon from their certain paradigmatic viewpoint; and together they provide a more balanced understanding of the phenomenon under consideration.*

1. Introduction

Any adequate analysis of democracy necessarily requires a fundamental understanding of the worldviews underlying the views expressed with respect to the nature of democracy. The paper discusses four general views with respect to democracy that correspond to four broad worldview. [1] The paper argues that the four views with respect to the nature of democracy are equally scientific and informative; each looks at the nature of democracy from a certain paradigmatic viewpoint; and together they provide a more balanced view of the phenomenon.

These different perspectives should be regarded as polar ideal types. The work of certain authors helps to define the logically coherent form of a certain polar ideal type. But, the work of many authors who share more than one perspective is located between the poles of the spectrum defined by the polar ideal types. The purpose of this paper is not to put people into boxes. It is rather to recommend that a satisfactory perspective may draw upon several of the ideal types.

The ancient parable of six blind scholars and their experience with the elephant illustrates the benefits of

[1] This work borrows heavily from the ideas and insights of Burrell and Morgan (1979).

paradigm diversity. There were six blind scholars who did not know what the elephant looked like and had never even heard its name. They decided to obtain a mental picture, i.e. knowledge, by touching the animal. The first blind scholar felt the elephant's trunk and argued that the elephant was like a lively snake. The second bind scholar rubbed along one of the elephant's enormous legs and likened the animal to a rough column of massive proportions. The third blind scholar took hold of the elephant's tail and insisted that the elephant resembled a large, flexible brush. The fourth blind scholar felt the elephant's sharp tusk and declared it to be like a great spear. The fifth blind scholar examined the elephant's waving ear and was convinced that the animal was some sort of a fan. The sixth blind scholar, who occupied the space between the elephant's front and hid legs, could not touch any parts of the elephant and consequently asserted that there were no such beasts as elephant at all and accused his colleagues of making up fantastic stories about non-existing things. Each of the six blind scholars held firmly to their understanding of an elephant and they argued and fought about which story contained the correct understanding of the elephant. As a result, their entire community was torn apart, and suspicion and distrust became the order of the day.

This parable contains many valuable lessons. First, probably reality is too complex to be fully grasped by imperfect human beings. Second, although each person might correctly identify one aspect of reality, each may incorrectly attempt to reduce the entire phenomenon to their own partial and narrow experience. Third, the maintenance of communal peace and harmony might be worth much more than stubbornly clinging to one's understanding of the world. Fourth, it might be wise for each person to return to reality and exchange positions with others to better appreciate the whole of the reality.[1]

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), social theory can usefully be conceived in terms of four key paradigms: functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist, and radical

[1] This parable is taken from Steger (2002).

structuralist. [1] The four paradigms are founded upon different assumptions about the nature of social science and the nature of society. Each generates theories, concepts, and analytical tools which are different from those of other paradigms.

All theories are based on a philosophy of science and a theory of society. Many theorists appear to be unaware of, or ignore, the assumptions underlying these philosophies. They emphasize only some aspects of the phenomenon and ignore others. Unless they bring out the basic philosophical assumptions of the theories, their analysis can be misleading; since by emphasizing differences between theories, they imply diversity in approach. While there appear to be different kinds of theory, they are founded on a certain philosophy, worldview, or paradigm. This becomes evident when these theories are related to the wider background of social theory. The functionalist paradigm has provided the framework for current mainstream academic fields, and accounts for the largest proportion of theory and research in academia.

In order to understand a new paradigm, theorists should be fully aware of assumptions upon which their own paradigm is based. Moreover, to understand a new paradigm one has to explore it from within, since the concepts in one paradigm cannot easily be interpreted in terms of those of another. No attempt should be made to criticize or evaluate a paradigm from the outside. This is self-defeating since it is based on a separate paradigm. All four paradigms can be easily criticized and ruined in this way.

These four paradigms are of paramount importance to any scientist, because the process of learning about a favored paradigm is also the process of learning what that paradigm is not. The knowledge of paradigms makes scientists aware of the boundaries within which they approach their subject. Each of the four paradigms implies a different way of social theorizing.

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[1] For the complete original discussion of the four paradigms please see Burrell and Morgan (1979). The discussion of the four paradigms in this paper is taken from Burrell and Morgan (1979).

Before discussing each paradigm, it is useful to look at the notion of "paradigm." Burrell and Morgan (1979: 23-24) regard the:

> ... four paradigms as being defined by very basic meta-theoretical assumptions which underwrite the frame of reference, mode of theorizing and modus operandi of the social theorists who operate within them. It is a term which is intended to emphasize the commonality of perspective which binds the work of a group of theorists together in such a way that they can be usefully regarded as approaching social theory within the bounds of the same problematic.
>
> The paradigm does ... have an underlying unity in terms of its basic and often "taken for granted" assumptions, which separate a group of theorists in a very fundamental way from theorists located in other paradigms. The "unity" of the paradigm thus derives from reference to alternative views of reality which lie outside its boundaries and which may not necessarily even be recognized as existing.

Each theory can be related to one of the four broad worldviews. These adhere to different sets of fundamental assumptions about; the nature of science (i.e., the subjective-objective dimension), and the nature of society (i.e., the dimension of regulation-radical change), as in Exhibit 1.[1]

Assumptions related to the nature of science are assumptions with respect to ontology, epistemology, human nature, and methodology.

The assumptions about ontology are assumptions regarding the very essence of the phenomenon under investigation. That is, to what extent the phenomenon is objective and external to the individual or it is subjective and the product of individual's mind.

[1] See Burrell and Morgan (1979) for the original work. Ardalan (2008) and Bettner, Robinson, and McGoun (1994) have used this approach.

The assumptions about epistemology are assumptions about the nature of knowledge - about how one might go about understanding the world, and communicate such knowledge to others. That is, what constitutes knowledge and to what extent it is something which can be acquired or it is something which has to be personally experienced.

The assumptions about human nature are concerned with human nature and, in particular, the relationship between individuals and their environment, which is the object and subject of social sciences. That is, to what extent human beings and their experiences are the products of their environment or human beings are creators of their environment.

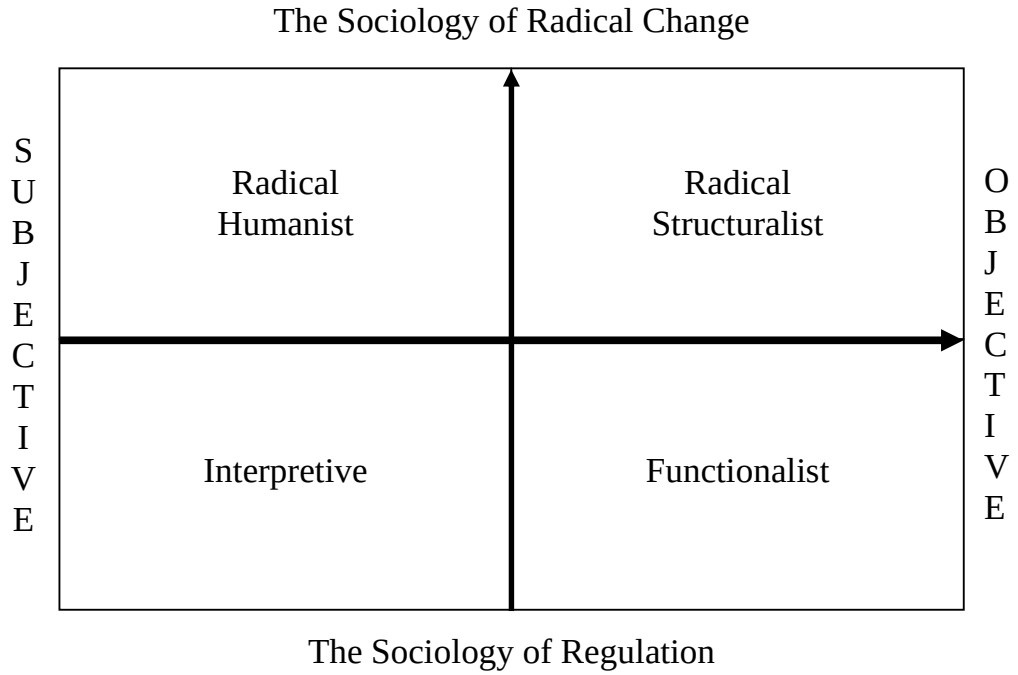
The assumptions about methodology are related to the way in which one attempts to investigate and obtain knowledge about the social world. That is, to what extent the methodology treats the social world as being real hard and external to the individual or it is as being of a much softer, personal and more subjective quality. In the former, the focus is on the universal relationship among elements of the phenomenon, whereas in the latter, the focus is on the understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies, and interprets the situation which is experienced.

The assumptions related to the nature of society are concerned with the extent of regulation of the society or radical change in the society.

Kavous Ardalan, *Marist College, U.S.A.*

Exhibit 1: The Four Paradigms

Each paradigm adheres to a set of fundamental assumptions about the nature of science (i.e., the subjective-objective dimension), and the nature of society (i.e., the dimension of regulation-radical change).



Sociology of regulation provides explanation of society based on the assumption of its unity and cohesiveness. It focuses on the need to understand and explain why society tends to hold together rather than fall apart.

Sociology of radical change provides explanation of society based on the assumption of its deep-seated structural conflict, modes of domination, and structural contradiction. It focuses on the deprivation of human beings, both material and psychic, and it looks towards alternatives rather than the acceptance of *status quo*.

The subjective-objective dimension and the regulation-radical change dimension together define four paradigms, each of which share common fundamental assumptions about the nature of social science and the nature of society. Each paradigm has a fundamentally unique perspective for the analysis of social phenomena.

The aim of this paper is not so much to create a new piece of puzzle as it is to fit the existing pieces of puzzle together in order to make sense of it. Sections 2 to 5, first, each lays down the foundation by discussing one of the four paradigms. Then, each presents the nature of democracy from the point of view of the respective paradigm. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. Functionalist Paradigm

The functionalist paradigm assumes that society has a concrete existence and follows certain order. These assumptions lead to the existence of an objective and value-free social science which can produce true explanatory and predictive knowledge of the reality "out there." It assumes scientific theories can be assessed objectively by reference to empirical evidence. Scientists do not see any roles for themselves, within the phenomenon which they analyze, through the rigor and technique of the scientific method. It attributes independence to the observer from the observed. That is, an ability to observe "what is" without affecting it. It assumes there are universal standards of science, which determine what constitutes an adequate explanation of what is observed. It assumes there are external rules and regulations governing the external world. The goal of

scientists is to find the orders that prevail within that phenomenon.

The functionalist paradigm seeks to provide rational explanations of social affairs and generate regulative sociology. It assumes a continuing order, pattern, and coherence and tries to explain what is. It emphasizes the importance of understanding order, equilibrium and stability in society and the way in which these can be maintained. It is concerned with the regulation and control of social affairs. It believes in social engineering as a basis for social reform.

The rationality which underlies functionalist science is used to explain the rationality of society. Science provides the basis for structuring and ordering the social world, similar to the structure and order in the natural world. The methods of natural science are used to generate explanations of the social world. The use of mechanical and biological analogies for modeling and understanding the social phenomena are particularly favored. Functionalists are individualists. That is, the properties of the aggregate are determined by the properties of its units. Their approach to social science is rooted in the tradition of positivism. It assumes that the social world is concrete, meaning it can be identified, studied and measured through approaches derived from the natural sciences.

Functionalists believe that the positivist methods which have triumphed in natural sciences should prevail in social sciences, as well. In addition, the functionalist paradigm has become dominant in academic sociology and mainstream academic fields. The social world is treated as a place of concrete reality, characterized by uniformities and regularities which can be understood and explained in terms of causes and effects. Given these assumptions, the individual is regarded as taking on a passive role; his or her behavior is being determined by the economic environment.

Functionalists are pragmatic in orientation and are concerned to understand society so that the knowledge thus generated can be used in society. It is problem orientated in approach as it is concerned to provide practical solutions to practical problems.

In Exhibit 1, the functionalist paradigm occupies the south-east quadrant. Schools of thought within this paradigm can be located on the objective-subjective continuum. From right to left they are: Objectivism, Social System Theory, Integrative Theory, Interactionism, and Social Action Theory.

Functionalist paradigm's views with respect to the nature and role of democracy vary somewhat from one author to another.[1] The work of Held (1987) helps to define the logically coherent form of the functionalist paradigm's polar ideal type, which comprises the rest of this section.[2]

Political life, like economic life, ought to be a matter of individual freedom and initiative. Accordingly, the key objective is a laissez-faire or free-market society with a minimal state. The political program should include: the extension of the market system to successively more areas of life; the creation of a state which is not excessively involved either in the economy or in the provision of opportunities; the curtailment of the power of certain groups (e.g., trade unions) who press for their aims and goals; and the construction of a strong government for the enforcement of law and order.

Individuals are the only social or political entities. That is, individual people with their own individual lives constitute the social and political life. There are no justifiable general principles that can specify particular priorities or patterns of distribution for society. The only acceptable organization (or mode of prioritization) of human and material resources is the one which is negotiated by individuals through their unhindered activities in competitive exchanges with one another. Accordingly, the

[1] For this literature see Abramson, Arterton, and Orren (1998), Bentham (1943), Coleman and Ferejohn (1986), Diamond (2008), Diamond et al. (1990), Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1998), Friedman (1962), Fukuyama (1989), Hayek (1960, 1976, 1978, 1982), Held (1987, 1995c), Hobbes (1968), Linz (1990), Locke (1964), Macpherson (1982), Madison (1966, 1973), Mill (1951, 1965, 1976, 1982), Mosca (1939), Nozick (1974), Przeworski (1991), Riker (1982), Saward (1998), Schumpeter (1976), and Young (1988).

[2] The rest of this section is based on Held (1987).

only justifiable political institutions are those that sustain the framework for freedom, i.e., those that maintain individual autonomy and rights. Where "rights" specify legitimate spheres of action for an individual whose boundaries may not be crossed without another's consent. The inalienable (natural) rights of the individual are independent of society. The most important of these rights is the right to pursue one's own ends as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others. The right to pursue one's own ends is closely intertwined with the right to property and the accumulation of resources. Ownership of property and the full appropriation of the results of one's own labor are fully justified if what is acquired is acquired originally and/or acquired through open and voluntary transactions between mature and knowledgeable individuals.

The minimal state is the least intrusive form of political power commensurate with the defense of individual rights. An extensive state cannot be morally justified because it violates the rights of individuals by forcing them to do things that they do not otherwise do. Individuals differ greatly. There is no one community that satisfies every individual, because their preferences widely differ.

The relationship among individual liberty, democracy, and the state should be organized according to the principles of representative democracy. However, there are fundamental dangers in the dynamics of mass democracies. These dangers are of two types. First, there is a propensity for arbitrary and oppressive majority rule. Secondly, there is the progressive displacement of the rule of the majority by the rule of its representatives.

There is no guarantee that what demos command will be good or wise, unless the demos are constrained in their decisions by some general rules. Some democrats falsely believe that what the majority wants should be regarded as being good. That is, the decision of the majority determines not only what is law, but also what is good law. In other words, when power is conferred by democratic procedures, it cannot be arbitrary. However, democracy is not infallible or certain. Many times in history, people have had much more cultural and spiritual freedom under an autocratic rule than under some democracies. Also, it is possible that the

democratic government of a very homogeneous majority might be as oppressive as the worst dictatorship. Democratic control might prevent power from becoming arbitrary, but it does not do so automatically. Only when a distinction is made between "limitations on power" and "sources of power" that steps towards the prevention of political arbitrariness can be taken.

Arbitrary political power is compounded by attempts to plan and regulate society, e.g., the welfare state. People's representatives in the name of the "common purpose" or the "social good" try to regulate their society through state economic management and the redistribution of resources. But, no matter what intentions are behind such efforts, the result is coercive government. This is because knowledge is limited. That is, we do not and cannot know much about the needs and wants of those immediately around us, let alone about millions of people in far away places. In addition, how should one go about weighting their various aims and preferences? Any attempt to systematically regulate the lives and activities of individuals is indeed an oppressive act and an attack on their freedom. It is a denial of their right to decide with respect to their own ends. This is not to deny that there are "social ends", which are the coincidence of individual ends. But it is to limit the conception of the latter to areas of "common agreement", which has a few constituents. It is only in deciding on the means capable of serving a great variety of purposes that agreement among individuals is probable. These means are non-intrusive, non-directive organizations that provide a stable and predictable framework for the coordination of individuals' activities. Individuals determine their wants and ends, and organizations, e.g., state, should facilitate the processes by which individuals successfully pursue their objectives.

There is a distinction between liberalism and democracy. The doctrine of liberalism is about what the law ought to be, and the doctrine of democracy is about the manner of determining what will be the law. Liberalism considers only what the majority accepts to be the law, and it desires to persuade the majority to observe certain principles. When there are general rules that constrain the actions of majorities and governments, no individual should fear coercive power. But, when there are no such constraints

democracy is in fundamental conflict with liberty. Democracy does not mean the unrestricted will of the majority.

Observance of the "Rule of Law" is the necessary and sufficient condition for containing coercive political power. Where, law is essentially fixed, general rules (such as constitutional rules) that determine the conditions of individuals' actions; and legislation is routine changes in the legal structure by governments. Individuals can have liberty only when the power of the state is circumscribed by law. That is, it is circumscribed by rules that set limits on the scope of state action. Such limits are based upon the rights of individuals to develop their own views and tastes, to pursue their own ends, and to fulfill their own talents and gifts. In other words, when there is lack of law then there is tyranny. And proper constitution of the law leads governments to guarantee life, liberty, and estate. The rule of law provides individuals with condition to decide how to use their energies and the resources at their disposal. Thus, the rule of law is the restraint on coercive power of state and the condition of individual freedom.

Democracy is not an end in itself, but it is a means, a utilitarian device, to help safeguard liberty, which is the highest political end. Restrictions must be placed on the operations of democracy. Democratic governments should work within limits placed on the legitimate range of their activities. The legislative branch of governments must be restrained by the rule of law.

The Rule of Law sets limits on the scope of legislation. It restricts it to general rules known as formal law. It does not mean that everything is regulated by law. On the contrary, it means that the coercive power of the state can be used only in cases and in ways specified in advance by the law. It does not matter much whether the main applications of the Rule of Law are crystallized in a Bill of Rights or a Constitutional Code, or whether the principle is firmly established in tradition. What matters most is that any limitations placed on the powers of legislation reflect the recognition of the inalienable right of the individual, the inviolable rights of individual. Legislators should not

interfere with the rule of law; for such interference generally leads to a reduction in freedom.

3. Interpretive Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm assumes that social reality is the result of the subjective interpretations of individuals. It sees the social world as a process which is created by individuals. Social reality, insofar as it exists outside the consciousness of any individual, is regarded as being a network of assumptions and intersubjectively shared meanings. This assumption leads to the belief that there are shared multiple realities which are sustained and changed. Researchers recognize their role within the phenomenon under investigation. Their frame of reference is one of participant, as opposed to observer. The goal of the interpretive researchers is to find the orders that prevail within the phenomenon under consideration; however, they are not objective.

The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is, at the level of subjective experience. It seeks explanations within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity. Its analysis of the social world produces sociology of regulation. Its views are underwritten by the assumptions that the social world is cohesive, ordered, and integrated.

Interpretive sociologists seek to understand the source of social reality. They often delve into the depth of human consciousness and subjectivity in their quest for the meanings in social life. They reject the use of mathematics and biological analogies in learning about the society and their approach places emphasis on understanding the social world from the vantage point of the individuals who are actually engaged in social activities.

The interpretive paradigm views the functionalist position as unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, human values affect the process of scientific enquiry. That is, scientific method is not value-free, since the frame of reference of the scientific observer determines the way in which scientific knowledge is obtained. Second, in cultural sciences the subject matter is spiritual in nature. That is,

human beings cannot be studied by the methods of the natural sciences, which aim to establish general laws. In the cultural sphere human beings are perceived as free. An understanding of their lives and actions can be obtained by the intuition of the total wholes, which is bound to break down by atomistic analysis of functionalist paradigm.

Cultural phenomena are seen as the external manifestations of inner experience. The cultural sciences, therefore, need to apply analytical methods based on "understanding;" through which the scientist can seek to understand human beings, their minds, and their feelings, and the way these are expressed in their outward actions. The notion of "understanding" is a defining characteristic of all theories located within this paradigm.

The interpretive paradigm believes that science is based on "taken for granted" assumptions; and, like any other social practice, must be understood within a specific context. Therefore, it cannot generate objective and value-free knowledge. Scientific knowledge is socially constructed and socially sustained; its significance and meaning can only be understood within its immediate social context.

The interpretive paradigm regards mainstream academic theorists as belonging to a small and self-sustaining community, which believes that social reality exists in a concrete world. They theorize about concepts which have little significance to people outside the community, which practices social theory, and the limited community which social theorists may attempt to serve.

Mainstream academic theorists tend to treat their subject of study as a hard, concrete and tangible empirical phenomenon which exists "out there" in the "real world." Interpretive researchers are opposed to such structural absolution. They emphasize that the social world is no more than the subjective construction of individual human beings who create and sustain a social world of intersubjectively shared meaning, which is in a continuous process of reaffirmation or change. Therefore, there are no universally valid rules of science. Interpretive research enables scientists to examine human behavior together with ethical, cultural, political, and social issues.

In Exhibit 1, the interpretive paradigm occupies the south-west quadrant. Schools of thought within this paradigm can be located on the objective-subjective continuum. From left to right they are: Solipsism, Phenomenology, Phenomenological Sociology, and Hermeneutics.

Interpretive paradigm's views with respect to the nature and role of democracy vary somewhat from one author to another.[1] The work of Held (1987) helps to define the logically coherent form of the interpretive paradigm's polar ideal type, which comprises the rest of this section.[2]

In representative democracy model, the initial relationship between the individual citizen and the elected leadership is immediate. Once elites are elected, the citizen is considered as distanced and vulnerable in the competitive clash of elites. However, attention is rarely paid to intermediary groups such as community associations, religious bodies, trade unions, and business organizations that relate to people's lives and connect them in complex ways to a variety of institutions. Therefore, representative democracy model is partial and incomplete.

This deficiency can be remedied by examining directly the dynamics of "group politics". In general, competition among political elites does not lead to the concentration of power in the hands of the elected elites. There are many determinants of the distribution of power and, hence, there are many power centers. In other words, it is highly unlikely that there will be overwhelming centrality of fixed groups of elites (or classes) in political life.

Whereas many liberals, in democratic politics, emphasize the importance of an individual's relation to the

[1] For this literature see Carr (1981), Carter (2002), Cohen (1989), Dahl (1956, 1961, 1971, 1978, 1985, 1989, 2005), Duncan and Lukes (1963), Duverger (1974), Fukuyama (1996), Gladdish (1996), Held (1987, 1995c), Hirst (1989, 1990, 1993, 1997), Hirst and Thompson (1996), Huntington (1991, 1996), Karl and Schmitter (1991), Keohane (1986), Lijphart (1984), Lindblom (1977), Lipset (1996), Marks and Diamond (1992), Miller (1993), Nordlinger (1981), Pollitt (1984) , Schmitter and Karl (1996), Truman (1951), and Waltz (1979).

[2] The rest of this section is based on Held (1987).

state, the emphasis should be placed on the "problem of factions". That is, there are processes that create, and result from, the individuals combining their activities in groups and institutions for political competition. Factions – i.e., interest groups or pressure groups – are the free association of individuals in a world where goods are scarce and the industrial system fragments social interests and generates a multiplicity of demands. One of the fundamental goals of the government is to protect the freedom of factions – so that they can further their political interests – and to prevent any faction from undermining the freedom of others. Factions are not only no threat to democratic associations, but also are a structural source of stability and the central expression of democracy. Factions with diverse competitive interests form the basis of democratic equilibrium and improvement in public policy. In the same way that economics is concerned with individuals maximizing their self interests, politics is concerned with factions maximizing their common interests. That is, individuals as satisfaction-maximizers act in competitive exchanges with others both in the market and in politics.

In politics it is the distribution of power which is of essence. Power is the capacity to achieve one's goals when faced with the opposition. Power describes a realistic relationship. For instance, A's power is A's capacity for acting in a specific manner in order to control B's responses. A's capacity to act in a certain way depends not only on the means which A has at her disposal but also on the relative magnitude of resources which are at A's disposal compared to B. Resources can be of a very diverse types, e.g., financial means and popular base. In a certain situation, financial means can be easily outweighed by an opposition with a substantial popular base. Inequalities abound in society (of schooling, health, income, wealth, etc.) and each group has access to some types of resources and in certain magnitudes. However, almost every group has some advantage that can be used in the democratic process to make an impact. Since different groups have access to different kinds of resources and in different amounts, the influence of any particular group generally varies from issue to issue.

Power is non-hierarchically and competitively exercised. It reflects a continuous process of negotiation and interchange between numerous groups of individuals representing different interests, including, for instance, business organizations, trade unions, political parties, ethnic groups, students, prison officers, women's institutes, and religious groups. These groups may be formed around particular economic or cultural interest, such as social class, religion, or ethnicity. In the long run, societal changes tend to change their composition, concerns, and positions. Therefore, agreement on national or local political decisions should not be interpreted as public unity with respect to matters of basic policy. A numerical majority at an election is no more than an arithmetic expression because the numerical majority is incapable of taking any coordinated action, rather they are the organized components of the numerical majority that have the means for such action. Political outcomes of the government are the results of the activities of executive branch that mediate and adjudicate between the competing demands of various interest groups. In this process, the political system or state becomes deeply intertwined with the bargaining and the competitive pressures of interest groups. Even each government department can be treated as an interest group because each competes for scarce resources. Thus, the decision-making of a democratic government involves the continuous trade-offs of the demands of relatively small groups, with the result that not all interests are likely to be fully satisfied.

In the final analysis, there may be no ultimately powerful decision-making center. This is because power is dispersed throughout society and there is a plurality of pressure groups and as a result a variety of competing policy-formulating and decision-making centers arise. Equilibrium or stability can be achieved only in the highly routinized governmental activities, which may be subordinated to elements in the three branches of the government and organized interest groups who may play one segment of the structure against another as circumstances and strategic considerations permit. The overall pattern of government policies over a fairly long period of time shows variations that reflect changes in strength and direction in

the power and standing of interests, organized and unorganized.

Overall, democracy can achieve relative stability due to the very existence of various interest group politics. This is because the diversity of interests in society most likely protects a democratic polity from the tyranny of majority by fragmenting it into factions. Furthermore, overlapping membership between factions helps to stabilize democracy because most people have multiple memberships in groups with diverse and even incompatible interests and each interest group most likely remains internally divided and too weak to secure a share of power commensurate with its size and objectives. The overall direction of public policy is a result of a series of relatively random impacts on government which are directed from competing forces with no one force exerting excessive influence. Thus, public policy in a democracy emerges out of the interactions of competing interests and somewhat independently of the influence of particular politicians. The representation of citizens and the equilibrium of the democratic system not only depend on elections and political parties but also on the existence of active groups of various types and sizes.

Although majorities almost never rule, they determine the framework within which policies are formulated and administered. The values of the voters and the politically active members of society define the bounds of a consensus within which the democratic politics operates over the long run. If politicians actively pursue their own objectives without proper attention to this consensus or without regard for the expectations of the electorate, then they have almost certainly guaranteed their future political failure.

The day to day democratic politics is merely the surface manifestation of superficial conflicts. Underlying the politics, enveloping it, restricting it, conditioning it, is the consensus on policy that already exists in the society. This consensus provides for the long-run survival of the democratic system which experiences endless short-term irritations and frustrations of elections and party competition. Political disputes almost always boil down to disputes over a set of alternatives which fall within the bounds of the consensus already in place.

Democratic politics is steered ultimately by the value consensus that stipulates the parameters of political life. Although, politicians or political elites have always had a profound impact on national policies, their performance can only be properly understood in the context of the nation's political culture in which they operated.

4. Radical Humanist Paradigm

The radical humanist paradigm provides critiques of the status quo and is concerned to articulate, from a subjective standpoint, the sociology of radical change, modes of domination, emancipation, deprivation, and potentiality. Based on its subjectivist approach, it places great emphasis on human consciousness. It tends to view society as anti-human. It views the process of reality creation as feeding back on itself; such that individuals and society are prevented from reaching their highest possible potential. That is, the consciousness of human beings is dominated by the ideological superstructures of the social system, which results in their alienation or false consciousness. This, in turn, prevents true human fulfillment. The social theorist regards the orders that prevail in the society as instruments of ideological domination.

The major concern for theorists is with the way this occurs and finding ways in which human beings can release themselves from constraints which existing social arrangements place upon realization of their full potential. They seek to change the social world through a change in consciousness. Radical humanists believe that everything must be grasped as a whole, because the whole dominates the parts in an all-embracing sense. Moreover, truth is historically specific, relative to a given set of circumstances, so that one should not search for generalizations for the laws of motion of societies.

The radical humanists believe the functionalist paradigm accepts purposive rationality, logic of science, positive functions of technology, and neutrality of language, and uses them in the construction of "value-free" social theories. The radical humanist theorists intend to demolish this structure, emphasizing the political and repressive

nature of it. They aim to show the role that science, ideology, technology, language, and other aspects of the superstructure play in sustaining and developing the system of power and domination, within the totality of the social formation. Their function is to influence the consciousness of human beings for eventual emancipation and formation of alternative social formations. The radical humanists note that functionalist sociologists create and sustain a view of social reality which maintains the *status quo* and which forms one aspect of the network of ideological domination of the society.

The focus of the radical humanists upon the "superstructural" aspects of society reflects their attempt to move away from the economism of orthodox Marxism and emphasize the Hegelian dialectics. It is through the dialectic that the objective and subjective aspects of social life interact. The superstructure of society is believed to be the medium through which the consciousness of human beings is controlled and molded to fit the requirements of the social formation as a whole. The concepts of structural conflict, contradiction, and crisis do not play a major role in this paradigm, because these are more objectivist view of social reality, that is, the ones which fall in the radical structuralist paradigm. In the radical humanist paradigm, the concepts of consciousness, alienation, and critique form their concerns.

In Exhibit 1, the radical humanist paradigm occupies the north-west quadrant. Schools of thought within this paradigm can be located on the objective-subjective continuum. From left to right they are: Solipsism, French Existentialism, Anarchistic Individualism, and Critical Theory.

Radical humanist paradigm's views with respect to the nature and role of democracy vary somewhat from one author to another.[1] The work of Warren (2002) helps to

[1] For this literature see Beetham (1993, 1997), Benhabib (1996), Berlin (1969), Bohman (1996), Bohman and Rehg (1997), Boron (1999), Cohen (1989, 1996), Cohen and Rogers (1983), Cox (1996b), Dryzek (1990, 2000), Elster (1998), Frankel (1979), Gutmann and Thompson (1996), Habermas (1976, 1996), Held (1987, 1993b, 1995c), Jessop (1977), Lehmbruch (1979), Macpherson (1973, 1977, 1982), Manin (1987),

define the logically coherent form of the radical humanist paradigm's polar ideal type, which comprises the rest of this section.[1]

Deliberative democracy consists of two complementary aspects: one is the equal distribution of the power to make collective decisions; the other is the equal participation in collective judgment. The power is primarily exerted through voting, which is democratic when each decision is made on the basis of the equal and effective vote of every individual who is affected by that collective decision. However, casting a vote by itself does not mean that there is necessarily a link between what each individual wants – either for herself or for the collectivity – and the collective decision. Democratic institutions should not only distribute power in the form of votes, but also guarantee the connection between the power to make decisions and equal participation in collective judgment. That is, communication – argument, challenge, demonstration, symbolization, and bargaining – and voting should be two central aspects of democracy. Communicative processes allow for the cultivation of opinions, the development of reasons, and the offering of justifications, and consequently voting illustrates not only the exercise of power but also the act of judgment. Deliberation, as a form of communication, is the ideal method of making collective judgments. Deliberation is a process through which individuals give due consideration to their judgments, know what they want, understand what others want, and provide justification for their judgments to others and to themselves.

Deliberative democracy requires not only the equality of votes, but also equal and effective opportunity to participate in the processes of collective judgment. That is, deliberation about public issues should not be restricted to political representatives, judges, media pundits, technocrats, and other elites, but should involve the whole society in the ongoing processes of public opinion-formation and judgment. Deliberative democracy advocates radically

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Mattick (1969), Middlemas (1979), Offe (1975, 1979, 1984), Offe and Ronge (1975), Pateman (1970, 1985), Pierson (1986), Plant (1985), Poulantzas (1973, 1975, 1980), Schmitter (1979), Vajda (1978), Warren (2002), Whitehead (1993), Winkler (1976), and Young (2000).

[1] The rest of this section is based on Warren (2002).

egalitarian positions in both dimensions. Deliberative democracy emphasizes the interaction between the institutionalized processes of deliberation, such as senate, and those that occur within society.

Contemporary social developments outstripped their liberal democracies. They include the changes in societies that are increasingly post-conventional in their culture; pluralized among lifestyle, religious, and ethnic groups; differentiated between state, markets, and civil society in their structure; subject to globalizing forces that reduce the significance of the state as a locus of democratic collective action; and increasingly complex in ways that tend to undermine the capacities of the state to plan. Deliberative democracy aims to address these developments, and to identify and deepen the democratic possibilities that have consequently made themselves available.

The social theory within which deliberative democracy is embedded views modern societies as differentiated according to three distinct media of social coordination: power, money, and solidarity, that are centered on the institutions of state, markets, and civil society, respectively.

1. Power, in its coercive form, is mostly monopolized by the modern state. It is codified and legitimized by laws, which are the results of democratic processes. Law is used for the organization of social coordination, which is rule-based and bureaucratic in form.
2. Money is the medium of exchange used in markets, which function in a quasi-automatic (non-planned, non-intentional) manner and aggregate the decisions of all individuals.
3. Solidarity is the direct social means of coordination. That is, coordination through social norms, traditions, and linguistic communication.

Power and money are mostly used to “steer” developed capitalist liberal democracies. States develop the administrative routines, expertise, and capacities to implement large-scale projects. Market prices inform, motivate, and coordinate vast numbers of producers and consumers. Both modes of organization are “systematic”. That is, they neither respond directly to, nor they directly reflect, the intentions of the individuals or norms of groups whose actions are oriented towards them.

These systematic modes of organization enormously increase the capacity of modern societies for collective action. However, such benefits are obtained at the cost of detaching high-level social coordination from normative means of social coordination. Thus, markets and states are incapable of answering the political question of: What ought we to do? This is because markets lack any agency of the sort that could respond, and state's bureaucracy is institutionalized in state routines and has its own organizational imperatives. In contrast, it is possible to obtain an answer to that political question only where social organization is centered on language-based communication. That is, deliberation connects solidaristic means of social organization to collective self-rule.

This is a paradox of modern social organization that its differentiated media enormously increases capacities of collective action, but detaches these capacities from the collective self-rule, which is inherent in democracy. That is, there is market detachment from collective self-rule, and there is detachment of bureaucratically organized power from collective self-rule.

The problem for deliberative democracy is to find ways to reconnect the normative aspects of modern society to self-rule. Not all social tasks might be coordinated by deliberative means because it soon faces the limits of time, scale, and expertise. For instance, time limitation can make deliberation prohibitively costly if delays translate into piling up of causalities, passing up of opportunities, and adding up of economic costs. A society organized as a deliberative democracy would undermine the considerable advantages of differentiation, including capacities to respond to social needs in timely, effective, and efficient ways.

Differentiation has advantages such as delegating an enormous number of relatively simple decisions to semi-automatic mechanisms like markets or bureaucratic routines. Its other advantages are its capacity of insulating solidarity from the burdens of economic and legal/bureaucratic functions. This is a key aspect of the modernization or "rationalization" of norms. Insulated from the direct economic and political functions, norms of social association – such as love and friendship, ethical discourse, science, art, and religion – can develop and follow their

particular rationales. In other words, moral, ethical, and other normative resources, can develop "freely" – according to their particular logics – only when they are not integrated into markets and states, and are not overshadowed by the logics of money and power.

This is a second paradox of modern social organization that "free" collective deliberation – in the sense that it can follow the logic of normative commitments – is now possible because they are free from any economic and political functions. However, the normative resources embedded in solidarity are relatively powerless compared to the systematic steering media of power and money. When states are authoritarian, and even totalitarian, they use their powers to control and even destroy the normative resources of social integration. When markets are dominant, they turn every aspect of life to economic utility and corrode the normative integrity of social relations. In contrast, a defining feature of deliberative democracy is to enable collective judgments to shift from the forces of power and money to the forces of talk, discussion, and persuasion.

It is possible to connect the spheres that can answer the "ought to" questions to capacities for collective action and crystallize the substance of collective self-rule, and at the same time retain the advantages of differentiated societies. The solution relies on the understanding that democracy has two complementary functions in social coordination and organization. First, democratic institutions should be created to protect and respond to the communicative forces within society. The second point is that in modern societies democracy should be viewed as a response to political conflict, rather than a social organization.

5. Radical Structuralist Paradigm

The radical structuralist paradigm assumes that reality is objective and concrete, as it is rooted in the materialist view of natural and social world. The social world, similar to the natural world, has an independent existence, that is, it exists outside the minds of human beings.

Sociologists aim at discovering and understanding the patterns and regularities which characterize the social world. Scientists do not see any roles for themselves in the phenomenon under investigation. They use scientific methods to find the order that prevails in the phenomenon. This paradigm views society as a potentially dominating force. Sociologists working within this paradigm have an objectivist standpoint and are committed to radical change, emancipation, and potentiality. In their analysis they emphasize structural conflict, modes of domination, contradiction, and deprivation. They analyze the basic interrelationships within the total social formation and emphasize the fact that radical change is inherent in the structure of society and the radical change takes place though political and economic crises. This radical change necessarily disrupts the *status quo* and replaces it by a radically different social formation. It is through this radical change that the emancipation of human beings from the social structure is materialized.

For radical structuralists, an understanding of classes in society is essential for understanding the nature of knowledge. They argue that all knowledge is class specific. That is, it is determined by the place one occupies in the productive process. Knowledge is more than a reflection of the material world in thought. It is determined by one's relation to that reality. Since different classes occupy different positions in the process of material transformation, there are different kinds of knowledge. Hence class knowledge is produced by and for classes, and exists in a struggle for domination. Knowledge is thus ideological. That is, it formulates views of reality and solves problems from class points of view.

Radical structuralists reject the idea that it is possible to verify knowledge in an absolute sense through comparison with socially neutral theories or data. But, emphasize that there is the possibility of producing a "correct" knowledge from a class standpoint. They argue that the dominated class is uniquely positioned to obtain an objectively "correct" knowledge of social reality and its contradictions. It is the class with the most direct and widest access to the process of material transformation that ultimately produces and reproduces that reality. Radical structuralists' analysis

indicates that the social scientist, as a producer of class-based knowledge, is a part of the class struggle.

Radical structuralists believe truth is the whole, and emphasize the need to understand the social order as a totality rather than as a collection of small truths about various parts and aspects of society. The financial empiricists are seen as relying almost exclusively upon a number of seemingly disparate, data-packed, problem-centered studies. Such studies, therefore, are irrelevant exercises in mathematical methods.

This paradigm is based on four central notions. First, there is the notion of totality. All theories address the total social formation. This notion emphasizes that the parts reflect the totality, not the totality the parts. Second, there is the notion of structure. The focus is upon the configurations of social relationships, called structures, which are treated as persistent and enduring concrete facilities. The third notion is that of contradiction. Structures, or social formations, contain contradictory and antagonistic relationships within them which act as seeds of their own decay. The fourth notion is that of crisis. Contradictions within a given totality reach a point at which they can no longer be contained. The resulting political, economic crises indicate the point of transformation from one totality to another, in which one set of structures is replaced by another of a fundamentally different kind.

In Exhibit 1, the radical structuralist paradigm occupies the north-east quadrant. Schools of thought within this paradigm can be located on the objective-subjective continuum. From right to left they are: Russian Social Theory, Conflict Theory, and Contemporary Mediterranean Marxism.

Radical structuralist paradigm's views with respect to the nature and role of democracy vary somewhat from one author to another.[1] The work of Held (1987) helps to define

[1] For this literature see Arblaster (1984, 1987), Beetham (1993, 1997), Bowles and Gintis (1986), Bromley (1993), Callinicos (1991, 1993), Cole (1917), Draper (1977), Engels (1972), Gamble (1979), Green (1985), Held (1987, 1995c), Holden (1988), Laski (1933), Lenin (1917, 1947),

the logically coherent form of the radical structuralist paradigm's polar ideal type, which comprises the rest of this section.[1]

The history of mankind consists of successive stages of development through an evolutionary process marked by periods of revolutionary change. It involves passing through five stages of development, from the primitive communal to the ancient, feudal, capitalist, and eventually post-capitalist modes of production.

Democracy is essentially unviable in a capitalist society. The liberal democratic state claims to represent the whole community, and not the individuals' private aims and concerns. However, this claim is, for the most part, illusory. The liberal democratic state claims to represent the community as if classes did not exist; class relationship was not exploitative; class interests were not fundamentally different; and these fundamentally different class interests did not largely determine economic and political life. The liberal democratic state formally treats everyone in the same way by protecting the freedom of individuals and defending their right to property. The liberal democratic state – which consists of the executive and legislative to the police and military – may act neutrally but the effects of its actions are partial. That is, it protects and sustains the privileges of the owners of property. The liberal democratic state defends the private ownership of the means of production, and in this way it takes the side of the property owners in society. The liberal democratic state – through legislation, administration, and supervision – reinforces and codifies the structure and practices of economic life and property relations. Therefore, the liberal democratic state plays a central role in the integration and control of the class-divided capitalist society, i.e., the maintenance of the exploitation of wage-labor by capital. The liberals' belief in a "minimal" state is their strong

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Luxemburg (1961), Macpherson (1982), Marx (1963, 1970a, 1970b, 1970c, 1971), Marx and Engels (1969, 1970), Miliband (1965, 1969), Moore (1966, 1980), O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead (1986), Ollman (1977), Polan (1984), Potter (1993), Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992), Scholte (2000), Singer (1999), Skocpol (1979), Therborn (1977), and Topham and Coates (1968).

[1] The rest of this section is based on Held (1987).

belief in government intervention to stop those who challenge the inequalities produced by the so-called free market, i.e., the liberal or liberal democratic state is a coercive, strong state. The liberal democratic state's defense of the private ownership of the means of production contradicts its ideals of a political and economic order comprising "free and equal" citizens. The liberal democratic state's tendency towards universal suffrage and political equality was admirable but its implementation became severely problematic due to the inequalities of class, which restricted the freedom of choice of many people in political, economic, and social life.

Liberal states restrict freedom to a minority of the population by protecting and promoting the capitalist relations of production and the market system. Capitalism contributed to the prospect of freedom – by modernizing the means of production and helping generate its material prerequisites– and simultaneously prevented its actualization. However, real freedom places equality at its centre, and is concerned above all with equal freedom for all. Such freedom requires the complete democratization of both society and the state. This, in turn, requires the destruction of social classes and class power in all its forms.

After the revolution, when the capitalist relations of production are destroyed, a free, equal, and democratic society will be established. The working class will replace the old society with an association which will exclude classes and their corresponding antagonism. There will be no need for political power, because political power is indeed the official expression of antagonism in a class-divided society.

Political power of one class is used to oppress the other class. When the proletariat makes itself the ruling class and forcefully replaces the old relations of production, then it sweeps away the conditions for the existence of classes and class antagonisms and thereby abolishes both its own supremacy and its own class. When, class distinctions disappear and all production is concentrated in the hands of the whole people, the public power loses its political character. In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, there will be an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

After the destruction of the bourgeois class, there is no need for an organized political power, i.e., state. This is because: (1) the state is a superstructure that develops on the basis of social and economic relations; (2) the state secures and promotes production relations while it does not have the option to determine the nature and form of these; (3) the state coordinates a class-divided society in accordance with the long-term interests of the dominant class; (4) class relations determine the key areas of power and conflict in state and in society; and (5) after classes are finally transcended, the political power, i.e., the state, will be deprived of its basis and politics will be without a role to play.

The working class and its allies use the state to transform economic and social relations while defending their revolution against the remnants of the bourgeois order. While the socialist state's authority is extended over the economy and society – e.g., over large-scale factories and investment funds – the sovereign state must have unrestricted accountability to the sovereign people. That is, the socialist state must be fully accountable in all its operations to its citizens. In addition, the socialist state must become an apparatus for the coordination and direction of social life without using coercion. This transitional stage in the struggle for communism is called the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

The dictatorship of proletariat, which is established during the revolution, will wither away by the time communism starts. The dictatorship of the proletariat means the democratic control of society and state by those who neither own nor control the means of production, i.e., the overwhelming majority of adults.

The dictatorship of the proletariat and the abolition of the state are concepts which have been drawn from the experience of the Paris Commune. In 1871 there was a major uprising in Paris in which thousands of workers tried to overthrow their old and corrupt governmental structure. The movement lasted for some time but was finally crushed by the French army. This experience provided lessons with respect to the planning of a remarkable series of institutional innovations and a new form of government: the Commune.

The Commune consisted of the municipal councilors, who were chosen by universal suffrage in different wards of the town. They were responsible and revocable at short terms. Its members were mostly working men or the representatives of the working class. The Commune was not to be a parliamentary body. It was to be simultaneously a working, executive, and legislative body. The police was to lose its political attributes, and was to stop acting as the agent of the Central Government. The police turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. The same role was played by the officials of all other branches of the Administration. All the public servants, from the members of the Commune downwards, had to be paid workmen's wages. The high dignitaries of State and their high allowances disappeared. Public functions were no longer either the private property or the tools of the Central Government. The Commune was responsible not only for the municipal administration, but also the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State.

The Commune broke the spiritual force of repression by the disestablishment of all churches. All the educational institutions were freely opened to the people, and educational contents were cleared of all interventions of Church and State. That is, not only education was accessible to all, but also science itself was purged of all class prejudices and governmental impositions. The judicial functionaries, e.g., magistrates and judges, were to be elective, responsible, and revocable.

Therefore, the liberal state would be replaced by the Commune structure. All aspects of the government would be fully accountable to all citizens. The general will of the people would prevail. Communities would administer their own affairs, elect delegates to larger administrative units (districts, towns) and these would, in turn, elect candidates to larger areas of administration (the national delegation). This organization is known as the pyramid structure of direct democracy. That is, all delegates are revocable, bound by the instructions of their constituency, and organized into a pyramid of directly elected committees.

6. Conclusion

This paper briefly discussed four views expressed with respect to the nature and role of democracy. The functionalist paradigm advocates representative democracy; the interpretive paradigm advocates plural democracy; the radical humanist paradigm advocates deliberative democracy; and the radical structuralist paradigm advocates delegative democracy.

Each paradigm is logically coherent – in terms of its underlying assumptions – and conceptualizes and studies the phenomenon in a certain way, and generates distinctive kinds of insight and understanding. Therefore different paradigms in combination provide a broader understanding of the phenomenon under consideration. An understanding of different paradigms leads to a better understanding of the multi-faceted nature of the phenomenon.

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